



# Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

# Newsletter

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015

# #88

No ads are paid for in these newsletter.

## NZRL National Premiership Rugby League

### Massey Park, Auckland. Sunday 20 August 2015

### Final this Friday at Bruce Pulman Park All Welcome!



Waicoa's Israel Vano-Stoner. Counties Manukau Stingrays v Wai-Coa-Bay Stallions.



Counties player Joseph Price is tackled. Counties Manukau Stingrays v Wai-Coa-Bay Stallions.



Akarana's Dan Palavi. Akarana Falcons v Wellington Orcas.



Wellington's Greg Strickland. Akarana Falcons v Wellington Orcas.



Dan Palavi scores a try. Akarana Falcons v Wellington Orcas.



Minutes silence by both teams. Akarana Falcons v Wellington Orcas.



Akarana's Peni Minisale. Akarana Falcons v Wellington Orcas.



Central players celebrate their win. Central Vipers v Northern Swords.



Kawana Marsden for the Swords. Central Vipers v Northern Swords.

Photos courtesy of [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)

**I**KNOW ABOUT disappointment, with my Vodafone Warriors flogged by the Tigers 50-16, an identical score to the week before against the Cowboys. Seven losses in a row. Terrible. Least said, soonest mended.

It has been a horrible year for us since round 19, when we fourth. It's all been downhill since, but that is life.

### **Big Ben Back**

Ben Matulino is back from suspension and Chad Townsend has been recalled for his last game for the Vodafone Warriors when we face the Bulldogs on Sunday at ANZ Stadium (8.30pm NZT).

Matulino has been out since August 8 after being banned for three games for a shoulder charge.

Townsend has missed our last two matches but returns for his 41st and last game for the club before returning to Sydney to rejoin Cronulla. He has been named to partner Mason Lino, who will wear the No 7 jersey in his third NRL game.

### **Tomkins Done And Dusted?**

Fullback Sam Tomkins looks destined to miss what would have been his 38th outing before heading back to England. His left knee injury flared up again last Sunday and is being given every chance to prove his fitness but he hasn't been named, with Tuimoala Lolohea being switched to fullback.

### **Last One For Ikahihifo And Friend**

Sebastine Ikahihifo goes to the bench for what will be his last NRL appearance for the Vodafone Warriors on Sunday. Hooker Nathan Friend will line up for the 86th and final time before heading back to the Titans.

### **Charlie gets four weeks**

Charlie Gubb is now suspended for four games after taking early guilty pleas on two shoulder charge offences.

### **Three Go The Distance**

Just three players – Nathan Friend, centre Solomone Kata and captain Simon Mannering – are set to finish the campaign featuring in all 24 games this season.

Mannering played against the Tigers despite being seriously ill. The club said he looked as crook

As a dog during the warm-up but insisted he could play. You would have to say that is typical of our captain.

Mannering was replaced after 68 minutes after making 30 tackles and missing just one. He wasn't well enough to attend the post-match media conference.

### **Eight Losses On The Spin Will Be Hard To Swallow**

The Vodafone Warriors will seek to end a run of seven defeats against a side that could have the lure of a top four spot to play for.

The Bulldogs have been among the Vodafone Warriors' most demanding opponents. In 32 games since 1995 they have won 12 and drawn two while the Bulldogs have won 18. In 14 away encounters the win-loss record favours the Dogs 8-4, with two draws.

The Bulldogs have won the last four matches between the two sides with the Vodafone Warriors' last success a 36-12 win at Mt Smart, while they won 30-24 at ANZ in 2010.

### **Team For Weekend**

Tuimoala Lolohea, Matt Allwood, Dominique Peyroux, Solomone Kata, Jonathan Wright, Chad Townsend, Mason Lino, Albert Vete, Nathan Friend, Ben Matulino, Bodene Thompson, Ryan Hoffman, Simon Mannering.  
Bench: Konrad Hurrell, Raymond Faitala-Mariner, Sebastine Ikahihifo, Sam Lisone, Siliva Havili.

### **Juniors On Track**

The Vodafone Warriors are poised to have both their New South Wales Cup and NYC teams in the finals for the third season running.

The club's NSW Cup side secured a play-off spot weeks ago and finished fourth to earn a life when the finals start against the Mounties next weekend.

The Junior Warriors slugged out a 16-16 draw with the Tigers, enough to secure a finals berth for the eighth straight season.

The Juniors could finish the season as high as fifth if they go to 28 points with a win over the Bulldogs this week and other results fall their way.

### **Club League Finals All Set**

The pinnacle of club league takes place this Saturday at Mt Smart and I'm very excited because it is the breeding ground for up-and-coming talent.

The SAS Sharman Cup final is first up at 11.30am when the Richmond Bulldogs take on Te Atatu.

And strike a blow for women's league and its strength in South Auckland, with Manurewa up against Papakura in the second game.

*Continued on next page...*



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The Appliance Shed Fox Memorial kicks off at 3.30pm with Mt Albert looking to add another title to its impressive tally, with the Pt Chevalier Pirates in their way.

I encourage all league fans to support the day because it is the culmination of a season of hard work.

It's just \$10 at the gate, and \$2 for those under 15.

### Great Result For Young Hawk

I was delighted when my beloved Mangere East Hawks had halfback Raymond Talimalie named the Auckland Rugby League player of the year.

He was a star for my Hawks, made his Auckland debut, and stepped up to play in the NSW Cup with the Vodafone Warriors.

Talimalie was in the 2013 Melbourne Storm U20s, and wants to relaunch his career after returning to Auckland for family reasons.

"I am stoked but if it wasn't for family and everyone around me I wouldn't be here," he said. "I have had more confidence this season and have just been playing what is in front of me. Hopefully something does pop up in terms of a contract at a higher level. Right now it's just about working hard, getting to my peak and going from there."

In other major awards Richmond dummy-half Georgia Hale capped a great year, in which she made her Kiwi Ferns debut, by winning the women's player of the year.

### All Blacks Side Leaves A few Out In The Cold

And like a lot of you I was watching the TV to get the All Blacks for the Rugby World Cup, and I could not help but feel for Israel Dagg, Cory Jane, and Charles Piutau, who all missed the squad.

Coach Steve Hansen had to make the tough calls and while I don't pretend to know a lot about rugby, since I am just a fan, it must be a nice problem to have when you can name Colin Slade, Dan Carter and Beauden Barrett at first-five and leave Lima Sopoaga at home too.

It must be utterly devastating to put your heart and soul into rugby, only to miss out.

He seemed to realise the axe falling on some established players would be a bitter pill. "We know there are players who are disappointed. We are a tight-knit family and it's always difficult when players miss out. It won't be the last time players who have missed out play for the All Blacks. As we have seen, anything can happen with injuries, and we want those players ready to step in."

## Prize Winners - Prizes Posted Today!

### Signed 2105 Vodafone Warriors Jersey

Sharon Woolhouse - Halswell Christchurch

Sheldon Abbey - Avondale

### Book - The Kiwis 100 Years of Rugby League

Paul Larsen - Greymouth

**Win 1 of 2 Signed 2015 Vodafone Warriors Jerseys**

1 2

**The Kiwis**  
100 Years of International Rugby League

To enter: **YOU MUST** subscribe to Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club Newsletter, only one entry per person. Competition closes on **2nd September 2015**, drawn the next day.

Then post a stamped addressed envelope with your name, address and phone number to the address.

**Conciliation Prize:**  
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Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# Alex Murphy

By Barry Ross



**A**LEX MURPHY is one of the real legends of our game. Now, 76, he played 505 top class matches in the English Rugby League during his 20 seasons. In this period, he finished with 1,007 points from 217 tries, 150 goals and 28 field goals. Born in St. Helens on 22 April 1939, he signed with the local club on his 16th birthday. In 10 seasons with the Saints, he played 320 matches and scored 175 tries. He then joined Leigh and finished up his playing career with Warrington, when he was 37 or so.

Alex played 27 Tests with Great Britain, captaining them in three, and two for England. The brilliant halfback made two tours Down Under, in 1958 and 1962, while he finished with 10 Tests against Australia.

Alex is the only player to have captained three different clubs to Challenge Cup victories. He did this with St. Helens, Leigh and Warrington. During his long playing career, he won 22 medals on the English club scene for victories in every major competition. As a coach, he guided Leigh, Warrington, St. Helens and Wigan to Wembley for the Cup Final. He also coached at Salford and Huddersfield. A member of the winning 1960 Great Britain World Cup winning side, Alex also coached England in the 1975 World Series.

After finishing his coaching career, Alex worked for BBC television and also worked with two newspapers, the Daily Mirror and Manchester Evening News. An inaugural member of the English Rugby League Hall of Fame, Alex was awarded an OBE in 1998.

It was a fitting tribute when Wembley Stadium decided to construct a statue of him. Alex is one of five legends of the British game whose statues will be officially unveiled tomorrow, 29 August. The other four are Billy Boston MBE, Martin Offiah MBE, Eric Ashton MBE and Gus Risman. The statues will be unveiled before the 2015 Cup Final between Hull Kingston Rovers and the Leeds Rhinos.

The statues were commissioned in association with the game's charity, Rugby League Cares. The men to be honoured were voted in by a large panel of journalists, coaches, players, MPs, national newspapers editors and supporters and fans of Rugby League. Some information about the other four men involved indicates that they are worthy of this tribute.

Eric Ashton, centre, born 24 January 1935, passed away 20 March 2008, aged 73, 26 Tests, 15 as captain, 497 first class games and 1,589 points.

Billy Boston, winger, born 6 August 1934, now 81, 31 Tests, 478 tries in 488 games for Wigan.

Martin Offiah, winger, born 29 December 66, now 48, 33 Tests, 501 career tries including 20 in the NRL with the Roosters and the Dragons.

Gus Risman, centre, born 1 January 1911, passed away 17 October 1994, aged 83, Tests 17, 9 as captain, 843 games and 4,051 points in his club career of 25 years.



Finished statue outside of Wembley stadium.



Check out the unveiling here:  
<https://vimeo.com/137838355>



The great Alex Murphy next to his statue.

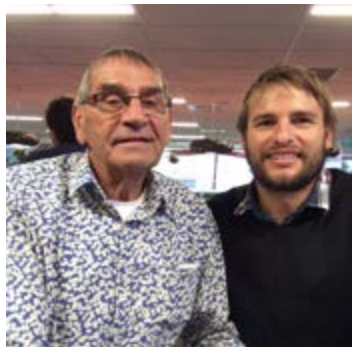
# Halswell Hornets Fundraising Luncheon

**H**ALSWELL RUGBY League once again ran their Halswell Hornets 2015 Fundraising Luncheon & Auction on 28th August. The day was a roaring success raising plenty of dollars and the guest speaker Petro Civaniceva was absolutely brilliant. Not only was he a fluent and interesting speaker he has been part of Canterbury training at the Halswell grounds and Halswell Prize giving events.

Petro talked about coming over to Australia from Fiji with his parents when he was six months old, playing rugby and league when he was at school. Playing thirty nine reserve grade games before he made his Broncos NRL debut. His State of Origin career for Queensland and his test career for Australia. His Penrith career of 3 years and his return to the Broncos. Playing for Redcliffe Dolphins for a season when he had retired and then Fiji for the world cup. He mentioned the difference in accommodation between the Australians and Fijians also they had to go out and catch and cook their own lunch. He loved it.

The first person he mentioned when asked who was the hardest opponent he played against was Reuben Wiki.

Petro's works for the NRL going around schools and clubs and a greater ambassador for rugby league you would not find. Everyone at Halswell loved him.



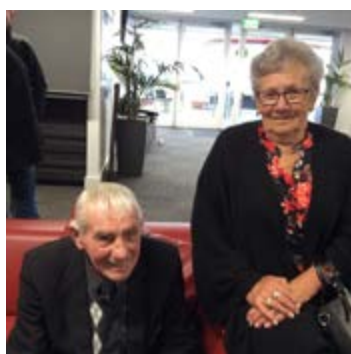
Brian Langton ex Kiwi with his son at the luncheon both had a great.



Walter Wilson Petro and Dave at Halswell luncheon last week in.



Lorraine and Dave with Petro Civaniceva at the Halsell rugby league.



Merve Whittaker a true Halswell trouper and legend and his lovley.



Dean Fisher Mike Doreen enjoying their time with Petro Civaniceve who played 235 games for the broncos and 74 games for the panthers plus 33 games for Queensland in state of origin and 45 games for Australia and 6 games for Fiji and one real nice guy



**Halswell Hornets Rugby League Club  
Christchurch**

**NZRL 'Grassroots' Club Of The Year  
2010**

<http://hornets.co.nz/>



**ONE SETBACK** followed another before a brave and hugely-inexperienced Vodafone Warriors side went down 10-36 to the Mounties in today's 25th-round New South Wales Cup clash at St Mary's Stadium in Sydney.

Stacey Jones had been forced to prepare for the match without countless regulars with the side consisting of 10 players from the local Fox Memorial Competition with 4 of those players making their NSW Cup debut.

The team now move onto the first week of finals as they finished the regular season in 4th place.

They play Mounties again with some regulars named to return to the team on Saturday 5th September at 2pm (AEST) at Belmore Sports Ground.

**You will be able to listen to the game live on [www.radiohub.com.au](http://www.radiohub.com.au)**



David Bhana on attack.



The team chilling out after their loss.



James Bell on the burst.



John Palavi our captain with the other captains in the finals series.



Raymond Faitala-Mariner.



Coached by Stacey Jones

It is an extravaganza of rugby league this Saturday live on [radiohub.com.au](http://radiohub.com.au) as Steele Sports bring you three huge Week One

VB NSW Cup Finals matches from Belmore Sportsground in Sydney.

Join Alby Talarico, Curtis Woodward and the rest of the commentary team from 1pm AEST, 3pm NZ, for all the action.

It all begins with the Mounties taking on the New Zealand Warriors in a mouthwatering showdown which pits the round 25 combatants against each other for the second straight week.

Who will move straight into the preliminary final?

Will it be the minor premiers or the boys from the land of the long white cloud?

That will be followed by two cutthroat elimination finals with a derby between Manly-Warringah and Newcastle from 4pm local time and Canterbury against the North Sydney Bears from 6pm.

Don't miss it!

Saturday from 1pm AEST.



# Week in Northland Sport

By Ben Francis



## Rugby Union

**T**HREE GAMES into the ITM Cup season under the Richie Harris era and Northland are still searching for their first win of the season after they went down 29-0 to Wellington on the Weekend. This the first time since 1985 Northland have been kept scoreless in a match. Northland are hoping to get both Dan Pryor and Daniel Bowden back in the coming weeks, both would bring experience to the field which Northland are in desperate need of.

Otago and North Harbour both picked up come from behind victories against Taranaki and Southland respectively Northland are now the the only team in the Championship without a victory. Northland will next host defending Premiership champions Taranaki on Sunday 2:35pm kick off.

Last week the Southern Districts Division II competition come under the spotlight after a big story with regards to clubs in the competition defaulting to Whangaruru RFC due to gang affiliations. The Northland Rugby Union has since appointed Graham Lowe to conduct a formal review of the competition. Lowe saying he was “surprised to be asked by a Rugby Union to get involved in their business.” Auckland Barrister Alan Webb will also join the review after offering his services to the Northland Rugby Union. The review will be done over the next few weeks and will involve meetings with the nine clubs in the competition with a report to be done and given to the NZRU who will decide on a way forward after the reviewing process.

After beating North Harbour 1A champions Rosmani College last week, Whangarei Boys High School got the chance to play Auckland 1A champions St Kentigern in the Blues Regional Final with the winner getting to represent the Blues region in the NZ top 4 competition. The final was played on Saturday and despite a fight, Whangarei Boys High School went down 47-12.

WBHS head coach Mark Kapa was happy with his boys and what they have achieved, “I think it's the first time ever that the school's been involved it to this final.”

For St Kentigern they will face Rotorua Boys High School and 2014 champions Scots College will face Otago Boys High School.

## Rugby League

**T**HE NEW Zealand Rugby League National Premiership got under way during the weekend which saw the Northern Swords go up against the Central Vipers, The Swords who were last year's wooden spooners were hoping for a good start to the new campaign but it wasn't to be. Both sides went back and forth in the early exchanges but in the back half of the first half, the Vipers went rampant and shot out to a 34-0 halftime lead. The second half was much improved by the Swords as the game ended 38-4. The Swords are hoping to bounce back against the Counties Manukau Stingrays this Saturday up in Kaikohe, it will be a midday kickoff.

The Under 15 Swords appear to be doing well in their buildup to the NZRL U15 Nationals at the end of the month. Over the weekend the Swords played against the Otahuhu U15's and the Auckland Maori U15's, they beat Otahuhu 32-18 but went down 10-8 against Auckland Maori's. The coaching staff are happy with the build up to the Nationals.



# Daniel Menzel's Amazing Comeback Journey

By Ben Francis



**A**NTERIOR CRUCIATE Ligament (ACL) injuries are devastating for any athlete taking part in sport. They can be a setback to anybody who suffers the injury. Current NZ Warriors player Ben Henry is recovering from his second ACL injury, we saw Jerome Ropati injure his ACL a couple of times and Thomas Leuluai along with Ngani Laumape are also out with the same injury. Heading into round 25 of the NRL a total of 27 players had an ACL or knee injury. I don't know what it's like to have an ACL injury and I'd quite like it stays that way.

Rupturing/tearing your ACL once is bad enough but what AFL player Daniel Menzel has gone through is a remarkable story. Menzel is currently 23 years old and made his comeback with the Geelong Cats last Friday night after not one, not two, not three but four, that's right FOUR knee reconstructions.

Menzel's first setback was in the 2011 finals in a match against Hawthorn on Friday 5th September where he ruptured his ACL in his right knee. Menzel underwent a full knee reconstruction. After going through intense rehab, Menzel made his return in June 2012 playing in the Victorian Football League (Like Rugby League's NSW Cup) and ruptured his ACL but this time in his left knee in his return game.

After going through intense rehab again Menzel made his return in offseason training in December hoping to be fully fit and healthy for the 2013 season but injured his left knee in training and it was serious once again. Menzel opted to undergo LARS reconstruction surgery. This is when a natural ligament is augmented with artificial ligament.

Once again Menzel made his return to footy in April 2013 playing in the Victorian Football League and successfully got through his return game. Sadly you couldn't say the same in his second game as he injured the LARS reconstructed ligament which then required a fourth reconstruction. He then sat out the entire 2014 season rehabbing his injured knee.

Advance to Friday 28th August 2015, Daniel Menzel was back in the AFL playing his first game in 1448 days.

"I never actually thought I wouldn't get back to this point. There's been some really tough times, but never actually thought, I'm never going to get back" Menzel said.

"At the end of the game it was a bit disappointing by my physio came up to me and said 'Mate, I know you are disappointed at the moment but just take a moment to be really proud of what we've achieved'" Menzel said.

This story to me is remarkable, and is one to inspire young athletes who have major injury setbacks, remember Menzel is 23 years old and had admitted he has gone through some dark times during these setbacks but he never gave up. As the great Jim Valvano said "Don't give up. Don't ever give up", and that's what Menzel did he did not give up it may have taken 1448 days but he made it back and that is why this story is inspiring to all athletes trying to fulfil their dreams.



## 2015 NZRL PREMIERSHIP

This Saturday **Round Two**

**Saturday, September 5**

**Northern Swords v Counties Manukau Stingrays**  
Lindvart Park, Kalkohe 2pm

**Wai-Coa-Bay Stallions v Rockcote Canterbury Bulls**  
Tauranga Domain 1.30pm

**Sunday, September 6**

**Central Vipers v Wellington Orcas**  
Springvale Park, Wanganui 2pm

Follow latest news & lives results via [nzrl.co.nz](http://nzrl.co.nz) or NZRL Facebook (#NZRLPrem)

Pics by Photosport





## THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S ROUND 26 ISSUE...

Broncos' Justin Hodges is nearing the end of his career

### FEATURES

- With the finals to decide when time is called on **Justin Hodges'** career we spoke to him about his life and football;
- The **North Queensland Cowboys** have had 20 years in the competition and though it took a while to get going, they have never been stronger;
- **Brett Morris** took some convincing by brother **Josh** to shift to Canterbury. Now he's settled in, finding his way and spending more time than ever with his twin;
- Not everyone gets a second chance at an NRL football career, but **Paki Afu** will arrive at the Roosters in October at the age of 25, ready to have a second run at making first grade;
- The **Sharks** are on the verge of a top-four finish. It's some focused goal-setting of Shane Flanagan's men that has their sights on the prize;
- **Nigel Vagana** was given the chance to work with the NRL post-footy but it was the study he was able to do while playing that helped him get it. The NYC players are being afforded the same chance.

**PLUS...** **Ben Hunt** talks Anthony Milford's fantastic form and what his forwards are achieving; **Matt Elliott** has a look at the tumultuous relationships between the media and players; **Nathan Brown** explains why two teams are well ahead of the pack.

**AND:** Official team lists; Warren Smith's Big Clash preview of Dragons and Wests Tigers; News: Robbie Farah looking at legal options, Valentine Holmes' ready with finals composure, Bellamy to assess future, Souths know they can get the wins; Top Eight ways to get through the off-season.

**PODCAST:** Special guest Aidan Guerra, coach pressure, Milford.



### THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

On sale at newsagents, supermarkets and at the ground from

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NEWSLIFEMEDIA

# Hayne Plane Soaring in the States

By John Coffey QSM



Jarryd Hayne has absolutely dumbfounded the many critics who predicted he would fail miserably in his bid to break into American football. They said the Hayne Plane would crash and burn, that he would return to Australia with his tail between his legs. It was even claimed he would succeed Warriors-bound Roger Tuivasa-Sheck as Sydney Roosters fullback.

Sure, Hayne is not yet there, but he has shocked not just his critics but also his supporters with the manner in which he has taken the San Francisco 49ers, and the United States sporting scene, by storm with his barnstorming kick returns. They have admired his sure handling, acceleration, evasive running, “stiff arm” (fend), dedication and toughness.

One lad from a Parramatta housing project has made more impact on American sport than the entire All Blacks squad which played in Chicago last year. The rugby codes hardly make a blip on the American radar. What has attracted the Yanks’ attention is that Hayne – son of former Warriors centre Manoa Thompson – is taking them on at their own game.

We are becoming increasingly accustomed to Australasian players switching between footy codes, whether it be league, union or Aussie Rules, and back again, though no-one has yet quite emulated the feat of Wellington-born Bill Hardcastle, who played for the All Blacks, Wallabies and Kangaroos between 1897 and 1910.

With all respect to old Bill, Hayne took on a bigger task than even he imagined. He has been a media sensation on two continents, with seasoned American experts drooling at his skills and Australian newspapers feverishly listing more potential gridiron recruits – starting with Tuivasa-Sheck and Israel Folau, who has already tried the three Australian oval-ball codes.

But most, or all, who follow in Hayne’s path are destined to flop. Hayne did not don the gridiron helmet on a spur of the moment decision chasing fame and fortune. He passionately studied American football for years and even hired a sprint coach to sharpen him up before leaving Sydney.

No matter what Hayne achieves from this point he has done more, much more, than expected. But if and when he scores his first official touchdown he will not be the first to get on both the NRL and NFL score-sheets. That distinction belongs to Manfred Moore, who played for the Newtown Jets back in 1977 in the midst of a moderately successful gridiron career.

Manfred who? Well you might ask. But Moore has a place in the rich history of Newtown, one of the original Sydney clubs which for the last 32 years has proudly soldiered on at Henson Park in the NSW competition. The Jets won three first-grade titles and were runners-up seven times between 1910 and 1981 before being squeezed out of the top echelon in 1983.

Newtown had the initiative to sign Moore soon after he played for the Oakland Raiders in their 1976 Super Bowl victory over the Minnesota Vikings. Having graduated from the University of Southern California, Moore played for the San Francisco 49ers and Tampa Buccaneers before being picked up by the Raiders to replace an injured player just before the Super Bowl.

Just 98 days after the Super Bowl the big, fast African American was not only playing on the Newtown wing but also scoring the club’s first try of the 1977 season against Western Suburbs. But Moore made only four more first grade appearances before being relegated to the reserve team and switched into the second-row, where he was in even more unfamiliar territory.

Rugby league was then a semi-professional sport in Sydney, and Moore did not have the benefit of full-time training. He did his best while his team-mates worked at their day jobs, but loneliness and homesickness took a toll. He really was in a different world. Legend has it that when he suffered a head cut he asked for a plastic surgeon! That was the American way.

*Continued on next page...*



Moore's club-mates were amazed at his passing skills. He could throw the ball, American fashion, across the full width of the field. One day, with the media duly assembled and in front of many Newtown fans, he threw a rugby league ball clear over the Henson Park grandstand. There is a famous photograph to prove it.

But it was clear Moore would not make the transition to rugby league. He could not master the different tackling techniques and his shortcomings were exposed. After returning to his homeland in 1978, he played 12 more NFL games for the Minnesota Vikings before retiring.

Moore revisited Sydney in 2007. He was photographed in a Newtown jersey at Henson Park recalling the fond memories of when he was mobbed by hundreds of Newtown youngsters during his short cross-codes venture.

## Nice Touch!

By Tom Hyde - In Dubai

**J**OHN LARKINS' wife, Hinemarie, was working for New Zealand Tourism when she was recruited by the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Cultural Authority. Leaving aside the details, the big question for them and their two young daughters was to go or not to go?

They decided it was an opportunity for an overseas adventure they might not get again. New Zealand would always be home but how did others around the world live? What food did they eat? What sports did they play?

On enrolling his daughter in school in Abu Dhabi, John discovered that organised sport for kids other than football (soccer) was virtually non-existent. In New Zealand, Larkins was a dedicated Touch Rugby player and administrator for the Wellington Touch Association for more than 15 years.

He wanted more activity for his daughter so when he took that concern to the school principal he was told, in effect, do it yourself. So he did. He introduced Touch to his daughter's class of 13 girls and that was the beginning of the Middle East Touch Programme.

Before long John and other volunteers, mainly Kiwis, were coaching girls and boys of all ages. "It grew so fast," he says, "we couldn't keep up. We were coaching four sessions a day with as many as 60 kids in each session."

After the first year, there were fifteen schools involved and as many as 1000 kids a week learning the sport in compulsory PE classes and with extra-curricular coaching. The program is in its third year now and has expanded to 30 schools across the UAE and now there's the official Middle East Touch Association with teams and competitions for all ages

in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.

Larkins and his coaches recently sent the first ever team from the Middle East to the Touch World Cup in Australia. They will play in England's national championships later this year and after that they head to Goa, India. India? Really?

"That's right," he says. "One day I got a call from someone there who wanted to introduce Touch there. He had been following our progress here. We Skyped and emailed and eventually, about a year ago, I went over there. It was incredible. Some school coaches and teachers travelled as long as 9 hours by train to attend my one-day introduction and then in just five months they had introduced the game to 75,000 students. We head back in December for their first national championship."

Touch Middle East has a five-year plan. The ultimate goal is making it self-sustainable, that is, administered, coached and played by more Emiratis who have taken to the sport for two reasons: it's new and exciting and can be played by all ages on multiple surfaces (grass is so limited it can cost \$300 an hour to hire a field) but most of all its non-contact.

"People here do not take to contact sport," Larkins says. "That's why we no longer call it "Touch Rugby." The 'rugby' scares them. They Google 'touch rugby' and with the 'rugby' they see a picture of Jonah Lomu and go: 'no thanks.'"

But hey, who can blame them? Middle East Touch has been granted "Nation Status" with the Federation of International Touch (FIT). Its senior men's rep team is now ranked 17th in the world...and climbing.

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# NZ Pick a Squad to Win - Not Defend - the World Cup

By John Deaker



**WHEN THE** All Blacks' World Cup squad of 31 was named on Sunday the selection of their outside backs was a key area that gave much more insight to the team than whether a few individuals would go to the World Cup or not. A recent theme coming out of the All Blacks' camp that coach Steve Hansen repeated at Sunday's announcement was that this team wasn't going to the United Kingdom to DEFEND the World Cup – it was going to go out and attempt to WIN it again.

It sounds like a great attitude in theory but the conservative selection policy often utilized during this coaching panel's tenure gave no guarantees that players like Cory Jane and Israel Dagg's lack of form would cost them places in the squad. Therefore the inclusion of Waisake Naholo and Nehe Milner-Skuda ahead of Dagg and Jane when the squad was finally announced was an important move by the selectors to back up the words that had been spoken.

It appears that the All Blacks' loss to Australia last month may have been a crucial wake-up call. If the team had continued it's winning ways it's naturally more likely the selectors would have retained their more conservative attitude.

By gambling on people like Naholo and Milner-Skuda it sends a clear signal to the team itself that if this group of players doesn't push hard to keep moving forward then they simply won't make history by becoming the first country to ever win the Rugby World Cup two times in a row.

The backline looks very classy and capable of surviving the odd injury. It's the forward pack where the biggest concerns for the All Blacks remain. Their tight five selections for the squad may have provided no surprises but that doesn't change the fact that it is their area of most concern.

In the front row the options were limited – and at this late stage it would have been a massive call for the selectors to go for anyone outside the group of players they've trusted in recent years. Taking only three specialist locks to the Cup is very risky though, especially when Jeremy Thrush was unlucky to miss out to Luke Romano for the third locking position. If someone like Brodie Retallick got injured leading up to a match like the quarter-final it would not only be a huge dent in the quality of the All Blacks starting 15 but it'd also massively compromise the bench cover they'd be able to provide for such a big match.

Players can be replaced at the World Cup - but once they are replaced, they can't come back in to the squad – and there is also a 48 hour stand down period before they can then play a match. Carrying both Liam Messam and Victor Vito (rather than a fourth lock) therefore appears to be a luxury the squad couldn't afford. Only time will tell if the gamble comes back to haunt the All Blacks' selectors.

The fascination as the tournament progresses through pool play will be how much opportunity different players get to impress in the handful of positions where there is genuinely some competition for starting positions.

First five-eighth will probably will be the most interesting to watch for many reasons. It remains a pivotal position on the rugby field and also provided All Black fans with the fairy-tale Stephen Donald story back in 2011.

All three players that have been selected for this World Cup have had many problems with injuries in recent years. There's no doubt Dan Carter is the front runner for the job – but the selectors will run a fine balancing act between ensuring he can play his way in to good form while trying not to expose him too much to injury.

## POOL C

	TEAM
1	 NEW ZEALAND
2	 ARGENTINA
3	 TONGA
4	 GEORGIA
5	 NAMIBIA

*Continued on next page...*



*Continued from previous page...*

Carter's main threat will come from Beauden Barrett who at his best can still challenge the 2015 version of Dan Carter ( as opposed to the untouchable 2005 version!) for the number 10 jersey. The difficulty this year has been that his leg injuries to the knee and calf have seen his game go backwards from 2014. If he can re-discover the playing form ( and goalkicking consistency) he showed when injury-free last year he could still pose a serious threat to DC.

The other player who we haven't seen the best of this year – partly due to injury - is Sonny Bill Williams. He carried a back injury for 6 weeks during Super rugby and then appeared to struggle to show anything like the athleticism that he had when he won the NRL with the Roosters last year. It seems more likely that his body was still troubling him this year than he'd forgotten how to play the 15 man game well. His form after a good rest through this current period will be fascinating to observe.

The All Blacks final pool match at the World Cup is against Tonga and escaping from a physical confrontation like that without a significant injury will be foremost in their minds. Any team needs a bit of luck to win a big tournament – and this All Black team will need it as much as anyone because the loss of a key player like Richie McCaw or Retallick could suddenly expose the fact that the depth in their pack is nothing like the depth in their backs.

How much this All Black team has retained up its sleeve will be interesting to monitor too. For many players it will be their last time in the All Black jersey and many of the individuals may have been pacing themselves towards a peak in October. The coaches may have kept a few things up their sleeves too – and just like McCaw showed against the Springboks earlier this year, having the odd clever trick up your sleeve can be very handy when it comes to the final minutes of a big game.

## All Blacks Rugby World Cup Squad



Photos courtesy of [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)

# AUCKLAND RUGBY LEAGUES Premiership Finalists Set for Saturday Triple-header

**T**HE MT Albert Lions and Pt Chevalier Pirates will face off in their third-consecutive Appliance Shed Fox Memorial Premiership grand final this Saturday at Mt Smart Stadium #2.

With the Lions having already booked their spot in the decider with a victory in the August 22 qualifying final, Pt Chevalier disposed of Papakura 22-0 last Saturday to put themselves in the position to win a third-straight title.

The game will be broadcast live on Maori Television from 3.00pm on Saturday, while tickets to the clash are just \$10 for adults and \$2 for people under the age of 15.

In the day's earlier games Te Atatu will face off with Richmond for the SAS Sharman Cup title, and promotion to the Fox for 2016, while the Papakura and Manurewa ladies do battle for the Women's Premiership.

The Sharman Cup game will be played at 11.30am, and broadcast at 3.30pm on Sunday.

The Women's Premiership final sees the competition's two best sides through the regular season clash, in what is a repeat of last year's decider.

That game kicks off at 1.20pm.

Premiership grand final details - Saturday, September 5

11.30am - SAS Sharman Cup - Te Atatu v Richmond @ Mt Smart Stadium #2

1.20pm - Women's Premiership - Papakura v Manurewa @ Mt Smart Stadium #2

3.30pm - Appliance Shed Fox Memorial Premiership - Mt Albert v Pt Chevalier @ Mt Smart Stadium #2



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- 1:20PM Women's Premiership Papakura v Manurewa**
- 3:30PM Appliance Shed Fox Memorial Mt Albert v Pt Chevalier**



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# PJ Marsh

Hi friends, family and local businesses. And Vodafone Warriors supporters

**My name is Pj Marsh.**

I am a very proud born and raised CQ man, former NRL player and State of Origin representative. and played 35 games for the Vodafone Warriors

As a recognisable sports figure in the CQ region, I have been asked in October 2015 to take part in the Kokoda challenge. This challenge involves a tough terrain 96+ km trek. The trail follows the footsteps of the brave Anzacs from many years ago while at war in the area.

I am completing this challenge to help raise funds for the Men of League Charity Foundation which helps everyday people that have fallen on hard times.

I will be accompanied by a number of other former NRL players with the same goals -raising as much money as possible and completing this extremely challenging trek. Being the competitive person I am, I need your assistance to help me raise the highest donations.

I don't believe in doing things half hearted, so I am well underway with my training ie. walking, gym training and adjusting my diet. As you can imagine 96km of trekking in challenging conditions will be demanding and taxing on my mind and body, so I can assure you I'm training hard to meet all the challenges involved.

Over the past few weeks, I have had many personal donations, the support of CQ Nutrition, Amart Sports Store Rockhampton with a few others soon to come on board.

Anyone wanting to find out more get onto this website:

<https://www.menofleague.com>

If you would like to donate please click on the link below:

<https://menofleague-kokoda.everydayhero.com/au/pj-marsh>

With only around 7 weeks to go, thanks to those who have already donated and helped raise awareness of the challenge.

If you think you can help or your business can assist in any way, please get in contact with me.

Thank you. Pj Marsh



## Shout Out to Wilard Hyndman

**SPECIAL SHOUT** out to Wilard Hyndman a former Mangere East Hawks man now a Pt Chev Pirates man who was taken from MT smart before his teams game last Saturday by ambulance to intensive care with a bad dose of asthma and flu get well mate you're a true rugby league man and hoping you get out of hospital to see your team play in the grand final this Saturday

# Get Well Soon!



i a Rāpāre/Thursdays 8:30pm on

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## TONIGHTS GUESTS - EP.19

**LISA TAMATI**

*Ultra Endurance Runner*

**DION NASH**

*Former NZ Cricketer*

**DARREN ELLIS**

*Godfather of NZ Crossfit*

*...and this week in the audience  
with KONI & FRAN are HAISLEY  
O'LEARY (Ultra Endurance  
Runner) & AARON TAKONA  
(Ahoribuzz singer)*



### NAU MAI HAERE MAI

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**Lock it in 8:30pm Thursdays  
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# Favourites Clear of Schools Semi-Final Scramble

By Grant Chapman

**O**N A day when calculators took a hammering, favourites St Paul's eased safely through to the NZRL National Secondary Schools Tournament semi-finals, but three other pools needed countbacks to determine playoff spots.

Biggest casualties in the scramble to progress were reigning champions Kelston Boys High, whose hopes were finally dashed with a 26-12 loss to Tokoroa HS in the "pool of death".

All three teams from Pool B entered the final day of preliminaries with 1-1 records, with the West Aucklanders holding a slim countback advantage through superior points difference.

Tokoroa were not to be denied, though, scoring first and never surrendering their lead. National age-group representative Dylan Clark was an inspiration to his young team-mates, crossing for two tries. But that group had one last twist left in the tail, with Tamaki College overwhelming Papatoetoe HS 26-0 to edge the Waikato side by two on points difference.

In the knockout stage, Tamaki now face Otahuhu College, who also needed a countback, after drawing 24-24 with Westlake Boys High in their final pool encounter.

The other championship semi will see St Paul's meet Mt Albert Grammar, a clash of the grade's two form teams. Chasing their 18th national title, St Paul's were far too good for newcomers Manukura School, prevailing 38-6, while Mt Albert headed Mt Roskill Grammar 30-14, behind a pair of tries to Isaiah Papalii.

Pool F of the development competition finished in the three-way tie for two semi-final spots, after debutants Onehunga High toppled previously unbeaten St Thomas of Canterbury 28-12.

The Cantabrians headed that group and Francis Douglas Memorial claimed the other vacancy, by virtue of their big win over Onehunga on Monday. Wesley College, last year's beaten development finalists, continued to dominate this division, running up their third 50-point performance in as many outings. Trident High of Whakatane continued their dream debut at this level, beating Howick College to grab a place at the next stage.

NZRL National Secondary Schools Tournament Bruce Pulman Park, Papakura

Semifinals Thursday, September 3 10.15am St Paul's College v Mt Albert

Grammar 11.45am Tamaki College v Otahuhu College

Final

1.30pm, Friday, September 4

## Our Old Mate Bill Whitehead Is Missing His Medals And Needs Our Help

**O**VER 12 months ago Rugby League identity Bill Whitehead gave two medals to a visitor, who told Bill he knew a man who could put the two together. Bill gave his Queens Service Medal (QSM) and the recently acquired Defence Service Medal (DSM) to the good samaritan. It wasn't until a few months later Bill realised they had not been returned and started to rack his old brain to think who had taken them.

He checked with Healthcare to see if it may have been one of his carers, and also got in contact with Mr Polaschek who does this work. Mr Polaschek said he had not received any of these medals, both with my name on. The defence medal has my rank (Lance Corporal - and my number (208107) on it..

If anyone has any news as to where these two medallions are Bill would love to get them back. [033599984](tel:033599984) or [rugbyleaguebilly@hotmail.com](mailto:rugbyleaguebilly@hotmail.com)





If you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** please email Stephen Maier at [stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz](mailto:stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz)

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## The Newsletter Team

Here is the team that help me make the newsletter each week. Between us we make the newsletter happen - and like everything it's a team effort.



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